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Applicant: AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH
COMPANY
550 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022 (US)

Inventor: Braun, Arthur Raymond
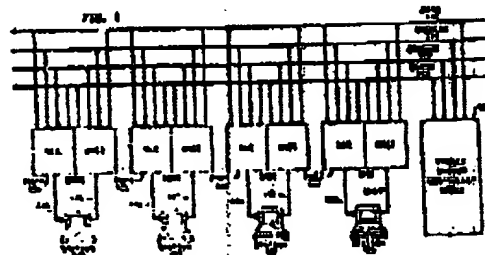7 Perchyn Road
Woodridge Connecticut 06525 (US)

Franklin, Andrew DeJongh
3460 16th Street
Boulder Colorado 80302 (US)

Pezarella, Gerard Joseph
4405 East 122nd Avenue
Thornton Colorado 80241 (US)

Representative: Buckley, Christopher Simon Thirsk et al
Western Electric Company Limited 5 Mornington Road
Woodford Green Essex IG8 0TU (GB)

Selective broadcasting arrangement for local area networks.

In a Local Area Network (LAN) comprising a plurality of stations having associated ports where each port has a unique address, an arrangement for providing selective broadcasting to a subset of the plurality of stations is disclosed. A transmitting one of the stations designates the subset by specifying two or more receiving stations. Thereafter, the transmitting station generates a single data message having a single specified address of only one member of the subset. A packet switch controller defines a mask that identifies which stations are included in the subset. The packet switch controller provides the appropriate mask to the transmitting station which when transmits a data packet comprising a data message, the specified address and the appropriate mask to the LAN. Each port decodes the transmitted specified address and the mask to determine if the transmitted message is intended for its associated station as a member of the subset.

FIG. 1

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Description

SELECTIVE BROADCASTING ARRANGEMENT FOR LOCAL AREA NETWORKS

Technical Field

This invention relates to Local Area Networks
(LANs) and, in particular, to an arrangement which
provides selective broadcasting of packet data
messages to a subset of a plurality of receiving
stations comprising a LAN.

Problem

Local Area Networks interconnect a plurality of
stations having associated port circuits. The stations
exchange packet-type data messages via the asso-
ciated port circuits over a shared bus arrangement.
A packet comprises a data message and an address
which defines a unique receiving port and an
associated station to which the packet is directed.
Each port has a unique address so that packets can
be exchanged between a transmitting station and a
specified one of the receiving stations.

Typically, a packet is exchanged between one
transmitting and one receiving station. However, in a
shared multi-user environment, for example, when
each employee in a single office connects to the
same network via his/her own terminal, station users
often rely on the receipt of common information to
perform tasks. The need to disseminate common
information to the plurality of stations is a practical
result of a shared environment. Therefore, it would
be advantageous to provide the capability to
disseminate common information to a plurality of
stations using a single transmission.

The accepted practice of disseminating common
information to members of a network is to broadcast
a data message. One of the most common broad-
casting methods is to utilize a generic address. In
addition to the unique address associated with each
port, each port also has a generic address. When a
transmitting station wishes to transmit a common
data message to a plurality of stations, it transmits a
packet containing the generic address. Each station
of the network receives the transmitted data mess-
age since each port has the generic address. The
use of a single generic address allows the transmit-
ting station to address all stations. However, a user
at a transmitting station may sometimes wish to
transmit a common data message to only a select
subset of the plurality of stations comprising the
network. Several methods exist by which to achieve
selective broadcasting to a subset of stations. One
method includes the pre-assignment of several
generic addresses to a single port. Each generic
address defines membership in a particular subset
of receiving stations. A transmitting station need
only select the appropriate generic address to reach
a particular subset of receiving stations with a
common data message.

There are several problems associated with
multiple generic address arrangements. One prob-
lem is that each port must maintain a list of the
multiple generic addresses by which it can receive
messages. The maintenance of such a list consumes

large amounts of memory space. Another problem is
that substantial amounts of address decoding time
is required. Each port determines if a transmitted
data message is intended for the port's associated
station by matching a transmitted address against
the list of generic addresses. A further problem is
that all receiving subsets are predetermined, that is,
all generic addresses are preassigned to each port,
and therefore the creation of a new subset of
receiving stations is precluded.

Another method of achieving selective broadcast-
ing is to duplicate the data message and transmit to
each selected station a separate, but duplicate, data
message. The problem with this method is that a
substantial amount of time is consumed by the
transmitting station in transmitting the same data
message for each selected receiving station. An-
other problem is that duplicated transmissions
unduly tie up the network and therefore prevent
other transmissions from occurring until such time
as the transmitting station concludes its broadcast-
ing.

Shared LAN arrangements are becoming increas-
ingly popular and therefore, an improved capability
to broadcast common information to defined sub-
sets of receiving stations is needed. The presently
available selective broadcast techniques are disad-
vantageous because of the problems described
above.

Solution

The above described problems are overcome and
a technical advance in the field is achieved by
providing a selective broadcasting arrangement for a
LAN. In particular, a transmitting station generates a
single unique station address together with a mask
when it transmits a single common data message.
The station address together with the mask defines
the subset of receiving stations which are to receive
the common data message.

To achieve selective broadcasting, a transmitting
station establishes a broadcast call to a designated
subset of receiving stations. A single data message
is generated with an address of one of the
designated receiving stations. The associated port
of the transmitting station includes a translation
table which provides a mask for that specific station
address. The combination of the specific station
address and the mask effectively creates a generic
subset address. The mask defines which bits
comprising that specific station address are "don't
care" bits. The definition of "don't care" bits creates
the effective generic subset address which uniquely
defines the subset of receiving stations.

For example, assume only a two bit address and a
two bit mask. Further, assume that the addresses of
the receiving station are 01 and 00, respectively. To
reach both stations, the mask provided defines that
the address bits in the second bit position, i.e., 1 and
0, respectively, are "don't care" bits. Therefore, the
transmitted effective generic address is a 0X where

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X indicates "don't care" and only ports having addresses with a 0 in the first bit position will receive the packet. In this manner, an effective generic subset address is created. The address portion of the data packet comprises the transmitted station address and the mask. The transmitting port applies the packet to the LAN busses and transmits the packet to the receiving stations.

Each receiving portion of each port contains mask decoding circuitry which decodes the station address and the mask to determine if the transmitted data message is intended for its associated station as a member of the designated subset. The decoding circuitry provides the circuit logic to determine which bits in the received address comprise the "don't care" bits. As previously described with respect to the example, the effective generic address is effectively a 0X. Therefore, the only significant bit to consider in determining an appropriate receiving port is the bit in the first bit position, that is, a 0. If the effective generic address matches a portion of the receiving port's unique address, that is, if the bit in the first bit position of the port's unique address is a 0, the port applies the transmitted data message to its associated station since the station is a member of the designated subset of receiving stations. However, if the effective generic address does not match a portion of the port's unique address, that is, the bit in the first bit position of the port's unique address is not a 0, the port rejects the data message since its associated station is not included in the designated subset of receiving stations.

The above-described masking arrangement for effectively creating generic subset addresses provides selective broadcasting capability for a LAN. This arrangement eliminates the need for each port to have a list of multiple generic addresses and thereby conserves memory space. Additionally, new subsets may be created with each transmitted packet since generic addresses are not preassigned to each port. The above-described arrangement further simplifies the address decoding process by including in each port non-complex circuitry for decoding the station address and the mask. A further advantage of this arrangement is that only a single data message is generated. This eliminates the need for duplicating the same data message and prevents tying-up the network for extended periods of time.

Brief Description of the Drawing

These and other advantages of the invention may be better understood from a reading of the following description of one possible exemplary embodiment taken in conjunction with the drawings in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a Local Area Network for exchanging data packets of information between a plurality of transmitting and receiving stations;

FIG. 2 illustrates the details of the port having an associated transmitting and receiving station;

FIG. 3 illustrates the details of an address/mask comparator comprising the port circuit

illustrated in FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 illustrates the format of a data packet;

FIG. 5 illustrates the details of a mask translation table; and

FIG. 6 illustrates a matrix table of examples of possible subsets resulting from the generation of different masked addresses utilizing a two bit address and a two bit mask.

Detailed Description

Local Area Network

FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a Local Area Network. This LAN comprises transmitting and receiving stations 100 through 103 having associated ports 104 through 107, a shared bus structure having data 110, address 111, control 112 and clock 113 busses; and packet switch controller (PSC) 108. The LAN interconnects transmitting and receiving stations 100 through 103 utilizing the shared bus structure which operates under control of PSC 108. Data packets are exchanged between stations 100 through 103 over the bus structure. For ease of description, only four stations are shown; however, a LAN may comprise a greater plurality of stations. Stations 100 through 103 may be any type of data transmitting device such as terminals or personal computers (PCs). Each station 100 through 103 connects to associated ports 104 through 107 over paths 114 through 121, respectively. Ports 104 through 107 serve as interfaces to the shared network bus structure for the receipt and transmission of packets.

The common network bus structure provides the transmission medium for exchanging data packets between stations 100 through 103. The bus structure comprises data bus 110, address bus 111, control bus 112 and clock bus 113. For ease of description, the address bus (111) and the data bus (110) are shown separately. However, in some LAN arrangements, the address and data information are confined to a single transmission bus and are not separated as shown. The address precedes the data message portion on the combined address/data bus so that the address portion of the data packet is read first in order to determine if the associated data message is intended for a port's associated station. Assume that for the remaining portion of this description that the busses are separate and that the address precedes the data message. The illustrated busses interconnect ports 104 through 107 and (PSC) 108. PSC 108 controls the establishment of connections between stations 100 through 103 for the purposes of exchanging data packets between a transmitting one and a receiving one of the stations.

Establishment of a Connection

To establish a connection between at least two stations of the LAN, such as station 100 and station 101, PSC 108 establishes the connection in the following manner. A user at station 100 initially goes "off-hook". An "off-hook" indication is applied from station 100 to the transmit portion of port 104 over path 115. The XMIT side of port 104 applies

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this "off-hook" indication as a packet to PSC 108
over control bus 112. PSC 108 responds to the
receipt of this "off-hook" indication, and applies a
dial-tone indication, e.g. a prompt. to the receive
(REC) side of port 104 over control path 112. Port
104 applies the prompt to station 100 over path 114.

In response to the prompt, the user at station 100
"dials" the extension number associated with station
101. Station 100 applies the extension number to the
XMIT side of port 104 over path 115. The XMIT side of
port 104 applies a packet containing an indication of
the dialed number to PSC 108 over control bus 112.
PSC 108 contains translation tables in its main
memory (not shown) which associates the address
of the port associated with the dialed digits of the
specified destination station, i.e., station 101. PSC
108 performs a translation operation to determine
the LAN address of the port, i.e., port 105, serving
the specified destination station. PSC 108, following
the translation operation, generates an indication
such as ringing to the REC side of port 105 over
control path 112. The REC side port 105 applies this
indication to station 101 over path 116. If station 101
is not currently engaged in a call connection, station
101 generates an answer indication to the XMIT side
of port 105 over path 117. The XMIT side of port 105
applies this indication to PSC 108 over path 112 to
indicate that the call has been answered by station
101. If station 101 is currently engaged in a call
connection, station 101 generates a busy indication
to the XMIT side of port 105 over path 117. The XMIT
side of port 105 applies this indication to PSC 108
over path 112 to indicate that station 101 is currently
busy. In the later case, PSC 108 responds to this
busy indication and applies a busy indication to
station 100 via port 104 over control path 112.
Station 100, in response to this busy indication, goes
"on-hook".

Assume that the case is the former, i.e., station
101 has answered, and that PSC 108 received an
answer indication. PSC 108 responds to this answer
indication and applies an indication that the call has
been answered to station 100 via port 104 over path
112. Following the establishment of a connection
between stations 100 and 101. PSC 108 serves to
establish the logical connectivity between ports 104
and 105 having associated stations 100 and 101,
respectively. Logical connectivity occurs through
the use of logical channels. Logical channels are
virtual connections that do not require a physical link
between two endpoints to maintain a connection. In
particular. PSC 108 generates control information
and applies this information over control bus 112 to
ports 104 and 105, respectively, associated with
calling and called endpoints, stations 100 and 101,
respectively. The information specifies the address
of the calling and called stations to transmitting port
104 which temporarily stores this information. The
transmitting port transmits a data message to the
destination port via the logical channel connection
based on this information. The logical connection is
maintained until PSC 108 removes it at the conclu-
sion of a data message transmission.

In addition to establishing each connection on a
per demand basis, PSC 108 can also establish

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dedicated connections between stations. These
dedicated connections are permanent established
connections between stations and are maintained
until such time as PSC 108 drops or reconfigures the
connection. This process is not described in further
detail, since it comprises no portion of the invention.
Assume that the connections between stations are
established as recited above.

Transmission of Data Message

The above description describes the process of
establishing a connection between port 104 associ-
ated with the calling station 100 and port 105
associated with the called station 101 through the
exchange of control information packets as trans-
mitted to and from PSC 108 over control bus 112.
Following the establishment of a logical connection
between stations, PSC 108 establishes the logical
connectivity between ports 104 and 105 having
associated stations 100 and 101 over address 111
and data 110 paths. The following briefly describes
the process of transmitting a data message from the
calling to the called stations, 100 and 101, respec-
tively.

Port 104 having associated station 100 monitors
control bus 112 to determine when a transmission of
a data message can start. Control bus 112 carries
framing information which indicates the start and
stop of a data transmission. Control bus 112 carries
an active framing signal to indicate that a current
data transmission is occurring and therefore, that
data 110 and address 111 busses are busy. Control
bus 112 carries an inactive framing signal when no
data transmission is occurring. In response to a
selection of an inactive signal on control bus 112,
ports 104 through 107 contend for the use of data
110 and address 111 bus to transmit a data
message. A single port wins bus contention. Bus
contention schemes are well known to the art. Bus
contention comprises no part of the invention.

Clock bus 113 connects to a system clock (not
shown) which provides a clocking signal for syn-
chronizing the exchange of data and control trans-
missions between the transmitting and receiving
stations and PSC 108. Each port 104 through 107,
and PSC 108 monitors clock bus 113 to determine
when signals are to be placed on data 110, address
111 and control 112 busses. To effect a data
transmission, a port, for example, port 104 having
associated transmitting station 100 waits for the
occurrence of a clock signal. Assume that no data
exists on data bus 110 and address bus 111 and
that, therefore, control bus 112 is inactive. Port 104
in response to this inactive indication and the
occurrence of a clock signal on bus 112, applies a
data message which includes address and data
portion from station 100 to data bus 110 and address
bus 111. Assume further that the address portion
existing on address bus 111 contains information
105 having associated station 101 as the destination
As previously described, each port 104 through 107
has a unique identification of address which uniquely
identifies that port.

Following the application of the address and data
message to address bus 111 and data bus 110

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respectively, ports 104 through 107 having associated stations 100 through 103 monitor address 111 and data 110 busses to determine if the data message extant on data bus 110 is meant for it. Each port 104 through 107 comprises circuitry to compare that port's unique address with the address currently extant on address bus 111. If the address on address bus 111 does not match a port's unique address, the associated data message is not intended for the port's associated station. However, if a match occurs between the address on address bus 111 and the port's unique address, the associated data message is for that port's associated station. In the previously described example, the address of port 105 matches the address extant on address bus 111. Therefore, the associated data message is intended for its associated station 101. Port 105 transmits the data message to its associated station 101. Further details of ports 104 through 107 are described subsequently. In the above-described manner, data messages are transmitted from a transmitting one of the stations to a receiving one of the stations over the shared bus structure.

Port 104 - Transmitting Activity

FIG. 2 discloses the details of the XMIT and REC side of a port such as port 104 having associated station 100. The details of each port 104 through 107 are substantially similar and therefore, only a single port is described. Assume that station 100 is sending a data message to a destination station, for example, station 101 having associated port 105, and therefore, the XMIT side of port 104 is currently active.

Station 100 applies the identity of the receiving station and the associated data message to XMIT interface 226 on the XMIT side of port 104 over path 115. XMIT interface 226 responds to the receipt of the receiving station identity and data message, and applies an active signal to packet formatter 225 over path 235 to indicate an occurrence of a start of a data transmission. XMIT interface 226 also collects the receiving station identity and entire data message and applies this information to packet formatter 225 over path 225. Packet formatter 225 formats this information into a data configuration having several types of information. Typically, the data configuration comprises several types of information but for ease of description assume that there are merely two types of information. The data configuration packet comprises the data portion which includes the data message and the destination portion which includes an indication of the designated receiving station.

Following the formation of the information into a prescribed data configuration packet formatter 225 applies the data portion to FIFO 223 over path 232 FIFO 223 temporarily stores the data portion. Packet formatter 225 concurrently applies the destination portion to translation logic 224 over path 234 Translation logic 224 performs translation functions on the transmitted destination portion to provide a LAN destination address. The details of translation logic 224 are discussed subsequently

Translation logic 224 applies the destination address to FIFO 223 over path 233. FIFO 223

assembles the destination address with the data portion to produce a data packet such as the one illustrated in FIG. 4. The destination address is part of the destination header. The mask portion of the destination header is discussed subsequently. Translation logic 224 also applies an indication of ready to transmit to FIFO control 222 over path 228 following the translation function. FIFO control 222 controls the transmission of the data packet onto the LAN busses. In particular, in response to the ready to transmit indication, FIFO control 222 transmits this indication to XMIT circuit 220 over path 227. In response to the receipt of this indication, XMIT circuit 220 scans network control bus 112 to detect if address 111 bus and data 110 bus are currently busy. As previously described, an inactive signal extant on control bus 112 indicates an idle condition and an active signal indicates a busy condition. When an idle indication is present, XMIT circuit 220 applies an active signal to FIFO control 222 over path 227. FIFO control 222, in response to the active signal, applies an active signal to FIFO 223 over path 229. In response to the receipt of the active signal on path 229, FIFO 223 applies the data packet to buffer 221 over path 230. Buffer 221 stores the data packet until XMIT circuit 220 retrieves the data packet from buffer 220 over path 231. for application to the LAN busses. If the LAN busses are busy, the data packet remains stored in buffer 221 until such time as the busses become idle. Assume that the busses are idle and, therefore, a transmission can occur. XMIT circuit 220 retrieves the data packet from buffer 221 over path 231, and concurrently applies the address header of the data packet to address bus 111 and the data portion of the data packet to data bus 110 in response to the receipt of a clock synchronization signal received on path 113 as previously described. In the above-described manner, the XMIT side of port 104 executes the transmission of a data packet from the associated station, i.e., 100.

The above discussion describes the circuit elements comprising the XMIT side of port 104 when station 100 is transmitting a data message. Now, assume that port 104 having associated station 100 is in the process of monitoring the LAN busses to determine if a data message extant on the LAN busses is meant for it. The following discussion describes the circuit elements comprising the REC side of port 104 as shown in FIG. 2.

Port 104 - Receiving Activity

Each port concurrently decodes the address of a data packet extant on the LAN busses to determine if the data message is intended for the port's associated station. In particular, the REC side of port 104 monitors the LAN busses to determine if a data packet is extant on address 111 and data 110 busses. REC circuit 200 monitors control bus 112 to determine if a data transmission is occurring. As previously discussed, an active signal indicates busy and an inactive signal indicates idle. Assume that a data transmission is currently in progress and that REC circuit 200 has detected the presence of an active signal. REC circuit 200 retrieves the data

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packet off of the LAN busses when the clock
synchronization signal, as previously discussed, is
applied to REC circuit 200 over path 113. In response
to the clock signal on path 113, REC circuit 200
receives the data and address of the packet over
address and data busses 111 and 110, respectively.
REC circuit 200 applies the data portion of the
packet to data buffer 201 over path 208. Buffer 201
stores the data portion of the data packet until it is
retrieved by FIFO 206 over path 217. REC circuit 200
concurrently applies the address of the packet to
address buffer 202 over path 209. In response to a
next clock synchronization signal on path 113, REC
circuit 200 concurrently applies an active signal to
data buffer 201 over path 208 and to address/mask
comparator 203 over path 212. In response to the
active signal on path 208, data buffer 201 applies the
data portion of the packet to FIFO 206 over path 217.
FIFO 206 stores the data portion of the packet until a
determination is made as to whether the address
specifies the associated station as an intended
destination of the data message. Further details are
described subsequently. In response to the active
signal on path 212, comparator 203 retrieves the
address stored in buffer 202 over path 210. Concur-
rently in response to the active signal on path 212,
comparator 203 retrieves the port's unique address
from port address 204 over path 214. As previously
discussed, each port has a unique address that
identifies the associated station for the purpose of
receiving data messages.

In response to the receipt of the transmitted
address on path 210 and the port address on path
214, comparator 203 performs a comparison oper-
ation between the transmitted address and the port
address. The details of comparator 203 are dis-
cussed subsequently. If a match occurs between the
transmitted address and the port address following
the comparison, then the associated data message
in the packet is intended for associated station 100
of port 104. Comparator 203, in response to the
address match, generates an active signal indicative
of an address match to FIFO control 205 over path
213. FIFO control 205 controls the receipt of the data
packet by the associated station. FIFO control 205,
in response to the active match signal, applies an
accept packet signal to REC circuit 200 over path
211 to indicate that the incoming data transmission
is meant for the associated station, i.e., 100 of port
104 and therefore, REC circuit 200 may proceed
monitoring for a next data transmission. Concurren-
tly, FIFO control 205, in response to the active match
signal, applies an enable signal to REC interface 207
and FIFO 206 over paths 215 and 216, respectively.
FIFO 206, in response to the enable signal on path
216, applies the data message to REC interface 207
over path 218. REC interface 207 in response to the
enable signal on path 215, unformats the data
message and applies the data message to the
associated station, i.e., 100, over path 114.

Assume now that comparator 203 does not detect
a match between the transmitted address and the
port's address. A signal indicative of a non-match is
applied to FIFO control 205 over path 213 from
comparator 203. FIFO control 205, in response to the

receipt of the non-match signal, applies a (match)
signal to FIFO 206. This signal prevents the data
portion of the packet from being applied to REC
interface 207 and thereafter, to station 100. The
above conditions indicate that the associated data
message is not intended for port 104's associated
station 100.

In the above-described manner a port transmits
and receives data packets when such packets are
exchanged between a transmitting one and a
receiving one of the stations comprising the LAN.
Now assume that a transmitting one, for example,
100, of the stations desires to address a subset of
the plurality of receiving stations, for example, both
101 and 103. The following discussions provides an
explanation of the arrangement to achieve selective
broadcasting from one station to at least two
stations included in the LAN arrangement shown in
FIG. 1.

Address Masking for Selective Broadcast

As previously described, each port is associated
has a unique address. The unique address defines
the identity of the intended destination of receiving
station. To achieve selective broadcasting, a trans-
mitting station generates a single data message
having a single unique address and a single mask.
The combination of a mask and a single address
effectively creates a generic subset address. The
effective generic subset address allows a broadcast
message to reach a prescribed subset of receiving
stations. The following description discusses the
arrangement for providing selective broadcasting
capability in a LAN.

A user at a transmitting station requests a
selective broadcast transmission. To activate a
selective broadcast request, the user dials a special
access code at the transmitting station. Other
methods of activating a service request are available
such as depressing a feature button; however,
assume that in the present embodiment a user dials
a special access code to effectuate selective
broadcasting. An indication of this selective broad-
casting request is applied as a packet via the
associated port to control bus 112. PBC 108
receives this request over control bus 112 and
implements an operation to activate the broadcast
capability. In particular, PBC 108 queries the trans-
mitting station via a packet which provides a prompt
to the transmitting station to identify stations are to
be included as destinations in the selective broad-
cast. PBC 108, in response to an indication of which
stations are to be included, establishes connections
between the stations in the manner previously
described.

Concurrently, PBC 108 scans a translation table
matrix stored in its memory (not shown) which
defines different combinations of subsets of receiv-
ing stations. An example of such a matrix table for a
two bit address and two bit mask is illustrated in
FIG. 6. Associated with each identified subset is a
mask. The mask serves to identify which bits in a
unique transmitted address are "don't care" bits
such that the remaining non-don't care bits, i.e., the
significant bits, effectively create a generic subset

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address. The effective generic subset address
defines the ports of the associated intended desti-
nation stations. For example, if a transmitting station
generates a data message having a destination
address of 00 wherein the destination address is
associated station 100 and the transmitting station
desires that only station 100 receive the data
message, a transmitted mask of 00 is specified such
that both address bits of the transmitted destination
address are significant. Therefore, only station 100
having an address of 00 receives the data message.
However, if the transmitting station desires to
broadcast a message to receiving stations 100 and
101 and transmits a single destination address of 00
which is the address associated with station 100, a
mask of 01 is transmitted in combination with the
transmitted destination address. The 1 bit of the
mask indicates that the second bit of the transmitted
destination address is masked and therefore, only
the 0 bit in the first bit position is significant.
Therefore, only station 100 and 101 having ad-
dresses of 00 and 01, respectively, receive the data
messages. The process of defining "don't care" and
significant bits at the receiving stations is described
subsequently. At this time assume that the matrix
table of FIG. 6 defines the appropriate mask for a
specified transmitted destination address when the
designated subset of receiving stations are as
shown in the table of FIG. 8.

An effective generic subset address may also be
created by calculating the appropriate mask for a
destination based on a specific transmitted destina-
tion address and the intended destination addresses
of the receiving station. However, for ease of
description, assume the table matrix is utilized in the
currently described embodiment.

Following the matrix table look-up operation, PBC
108 writes into the transmitting port's translation
table included in a port's translation logic element
such as translation logic 224 of FIG. 2, the
appropriate mask selection based on the trans-
mitted destination address and the specified receiv-
ing stations. The transmitted destination address, as
previously described, is the unique address of one of
the members of the subset. Following the mask
selection, the port associated with the transmitting
station applies a data packet comprising the data
message, the address and the mask (see FIG. 4) to
the LAN busses.

As previously described, each port includes
address decoding logic and each port concurrently
decodes the transmitted address to determine if a
transmitted data message is intended for its associ-
ated station. The address/mask comparator, pre-
viously described with reference to comparator 203
of FIG. 2, included in each port performs the
decoding function to detect if the associated data
message is for the port's associated station. The
details of the mask decoding logic are discussed
subsequently. If the effective generic subset ad-
dress matches the port's address with respect to
the significant bits, the data message is applied to
that port's associated station. If the generic subset
address does not match the port's address with
respect to the significant bits, the data message is
not applied to that port's associated station. The
following description describes in detail a transmit-
ting port's function in generating a selective broad-
cast message between a transmitting one of the
stations and at least two receiving stations.

Assume that station 100 has requested a selective
broadcast transmission and has designated stations
101 and 103 as the ultimate destinations of a
common data message. In particular, station 100
generates a data message having an address of one
of the ports included in the subset. As FIG. 1
illustrates ports 106 and 107 having associated
stations 101 and 103, respectively, have unique
addresses 01 and 11, respectively. However, station
100 need only include the address of one of the
ports associated with one of the destination stations
since a single address will supply the significant
bit(s). Assume that the address of port 105 having
associated station 101 is used, and therefore, the
transmitted address is 01. For ease of description,
each port address will be described with reference
to a station such that stations 100, 101, 102 and 103
are associated with addresses 00, 01, 10 and 11,
respectively. This is to remain consistent with
respect to the matrix table shown in FIG. 6.

As the matrix table of FIG. 6 indicates, if the
transmitted destination address is a 01 and the
specified receiving stations are 101 and 103, a mask
of 10 must be transmitted as part of the data
message. As previously described this mask serves
to identify which of the bits, if any, in a transmitted
address are "don't care" bits. By specifying "don't
care" bits, an effective generic subset address is
formed. Following the table look-up by PBC 108 and
the determination as to which mask is appropriate,
PBC 108 writes the appropriate mask into a
translation table of a transmitting port. Assume that
port 104 of FIG. 2 is the transmitting port, since
station 100 is the transmitting station. FIG. 105
provides the appropriate mask, 10, to port 104. This
information is written into a translation table com-
prising translation logic 224. The method of ex-
changing information between ports 104 through
107 and PBC 108 was previously described and is,
therefore, not discussed. The translation table
included in translation logic 224 is illustrated in
FIG. 5.

FIG. 5 illustrates the appearance of a translation
table as it appears in translation logic 224 of port 104
when station 100 is transmitting to stations 101 and
103 at line 502, and, alternatively, when station 100 is
transmitting to all stations 100, 101, 102 and 103 at
line 503. FIG. 5 further illustrates the appearance of a
translation table as it appears in a translation logic
element of port 105 when station 101 is transmitting
to stations 102 and 103 at line 505, and, alternatively,
when station 101 is transmitting to stations 100 and
102 at line 506. These tables are merely illustrative of
four possible broadcast transmission cases as
generated from two different stations. Different table
configurations occur depending on which stations
are transmitting and which stations are receiving.
For explanation purposes, all such variations are
unnecessary in explaining the selective broadcast-
ing arrangement. The matrix table of FIG. 6 illustrates

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13   0 265 757   14

the possible subsets available for a two-bit address and two-bit mask association.

As FIG. 5 illustrates at line 502, the identity of the transmitting station is 100 and the identities of the destination stations are 101 and 10?, respectively. Station 100, as previously discussed, transmits the destination address, a 01, of destination station 101 which is included in the subset of receiving stations. A single unique address combined with an appropriate mask effectively forms a generic subset address. The subset destination addresses of the intended receiving stations are 01 and 11, respectively. To achieve selective broadcasting to both destination stations utilizing a single address, a mask of 10 is provided by PBC 108. The mask identifies that a "don't care" bit appears in the first bit position, B1, and a significant bit appears in the second bit position, B2 as shown at lines 501 and 502. The masked address is effectively a X1 where X indicates a "don't care" status in a first bit position, B1. Only addresses that have a 1 in the B2 position will receive the associated data message. Any station having a 0 in the B2 position will not receive the associated data message. Therefore, for a transmitted destination address of 01 where the subset destination addresses are 01 and 11, a 10 mask is appropriate. The effective masked address of X1 is formed to achieve selective broadcasting from station 100 to stations 101 and 10?.

FIG. 5 illustrates at lines 501 and 503 further examples of broadcasting from different stations to different destination subsets. For example, if station 100 wishes to broadcast a common data message to destination stations 100, 101, 102 and 103, a mask of 11 is provided. The 11 mask indicates that the address bits in positions B1 and B2 are both "don't cares" and therefore, every destination will receive the message since no significant address bits remain. The translation table for port 105 illustrates at lines 504 through 506 further broadcast transmission examples for two different subsets. The "don't care" bit positions and the significant bits vary depending on the generated transmitted destination address and the destination addresses. The broadcast transmission from station 100 to 101 and 103 at lines 501 and 502 is the only example discussed in further detail.

Following the creation of an effective generic subset address as shown in FIG. 5, translation logic 224 applies the transmitted destination address and the destination mask to FIFO 223 over path 233. As previously described, FIFO 223 appends the destination header to the data message portion of the data packet. The data packet for selective broadcasting comprises a data message, a destination address and a mask. This data packet configuration, as previously described, is shown in FIG. 4. The data packet is applied to the LAN busses in the manner previously described.

Assume that the data packet is now extant on address 111 and data 110 busses, and the REC side of each port retrieves the data packet from the LAN busses in the manner previously described. As previously described, all ports comprise the same

circuitry and operate similarly.

Assume that the following description is of receiving port 105 having associated destination station 101 and that the circuit elements of FIG. 2 are applicable. Assume further that the REC side of port 105 has detected the presence of a data packet and that the transmitted address and the mask has activated the address-mask comparator.

Address Mask Decoding

FIG. 3 discloses the details of an address-mask comparator such as comparator 203 illustrated in FIG. 2. Comparator 203 of FIG. 3 shows circuitry comprising the mask decoding logic to determine if the associated data message is intended for the port's associated station. In particular, the circuit detects the presence of a "don't care" bit with respect to the transmitted destination address. The "don't care" bit identifies which bit(s) by bit position in the receiving port's unique address is insignificant. The remaining bit(s) in the remaining bit positions of the port's unique address are significant. The detection of "don't care" bits effectively defines a generic subset address. The effective generic subset address is compared to the unique address of each port having an associated receiving station to determine if the associated transmitted data message is intended for the port's associated station as a member of the subset.

In the present example, the transmitted address is a 0 in the B1 position and a 1 in the B2 position and the mask applied is a 1 in the B1 position and a 0 in the B2 position. See FIG. 5, lines 501 and 502 as the translation table for port 105. The port address of port 105 is 01 where 0 is in the B1 position and 1 is in the B2 position.

As previously described, the port's address is stored in port address 204 of FIG. 2 and comparator 203 receives the transmitted destination address over transmitted address path 216 and the port address over path 214. Assume that the paths 210 and 214 comprise several paths where each path carries a specified one, that is B1 and B2 of the transmitted destination address, the mask and the port address.

The following circuit logic operations are concurrently executed. However, for ease of description, each bit on each lead and each gate function will be viewed separately. The B1 bit of the port address, a 0, is applied to exclusive NOR gate 300 over port address B1 path and the B1 bit of the transmitted address, a 0, is applied to exclusive NOR gate 300 over transmitted address B1 path. The combination of a 0 on port address B1 path and a 0 on transmitted address B1 path provides an output of 1 on path 305. The 1 on path 305 is applied to OR gate 301. Concurrently, the B1 bit of the mask, a 1, is applied to OR gate 301 over mask B1 path. The combination of a 1 on path 305 and a 1 on mask B1 path to OR gate 301 provides a 1 on path 305.

Concurrently, the B2 bit of the port address, a 1, is applied to exclusive NOR gate 302 over port address B2 path and the B2 bit of the transmitted address, a 1, is applied to exclusive NOR gate 302 over transmitted address B2 path. The combination of a 1

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13   0 256 757   14

the possible subsets available for a two-bit address
and two-bit mask condition.

As FIG. 5 illustrates at line 502, the identity of the
transmitting station is 100 and the identities of the
destination stations are 101 and 102, respectively.
Station 100, as previously discussed, transmits the
destination address, a 01, of destination station 101
which is included in the subset of receiving stations.
A single unique address combined with an appropri-
ate mask effectively forms a generic subset address.
The subset destination addresses of the intended
receiving stations are 01 and 11, respectively. To
achieve selective broadcasting to both destination
stations utilizing a single address, a mask of 10 is
provided by PSC 108. The mask identifies that a
"don't care" bit appears in the first bit position, B1,
and a significant bit appears in the second bit
position, B2 as shown at lines 501 and 502. The
masked address is effectively a X1 where X indicates
a "don't care" status in a first bit position, B1. Only
addresses that have a 1 in the B2 position will
receive the associated data message. Any station
having a 0 in the B2 position will not receive the
associated data message. Therefore, for a trans-
mitted destination address of 01 where the subset
destination addresses are 01 and 11, a 10 mask is
appropriate. The effective masked address of X1 is
formed to achieve selective broadcasting from
station 100 to stations 101 and 103.

FIG. 5 illustrates at lines 501 and 503 further
examples of broadcasting from different stations to
different destination subsets. For example, if station
100 wishes to broadcast a common data message to
destination stations 100, 101, 102 and 103, a mask of
11 is provided. The 11 mask indicates that the
address bits in positions B1 and B2 are both "don't
cares" and therefore, every destination regardless of
unique address assignment will receive the message
since no significant address bits remain. The
translation table for port 105 illustrates at lines 504
through 506 further broadcast transmission exam-
ples for two different subsets. The "don't care" bit
positions and the significant bits vary depending on
the generated transmitted destination address and
the destination addresses. The broadcast trans-
mission from station 100 to 101 and 103 at lines 501
and 502 is the only example discussed in further
detail.

Following the creation of an effective generic
subset address as shown in FIG. 5, translation logic
224 applies the transmitted destination address and
the destination mask to FIFO 223 over path 233. As
previously described, FIFO 223 appends the destina-
tion header to the data message portion of the data
packet. The data packet for selective broadcasting
comprises a data message, a destination address
and a mask. This data packet configuration, as
previously described, is shown in FIG. 4. The data
packet is applied to the LAN busses in the manner
previously described.

Assume that the data packet is now extant on
address 111 and 110 busses, and the REC side
of each port retrieves the data packet from the LAN
busses in the manner previously described. As
previously described, all ports comprise the same

circuitry and operate similarly.

Assume that the following description is of
receiving port 105 having associated destination
station 101 and that the circuit elements of FIG. 2 are
applicable. Assume further that the REC side of port
105 has detected the presence of a data packet and
that the transmitted address and the mask has
activated the address/mask comparator.

Address Mask Decoding

FIG. 3 discloses the details of an address mask
comparator such as comparator 203 illustrated in
FIG. 2. Comparator 203 of FIG. 3 should contain
comparing the mask decoding logic to determine if
the associated data message is intended for the
port's associated station. In particular, the circuit
detects the presence of a "don't care" bit with
respect to the transmitted destination address. The
"don't care" bit identifies which bit(s) by the position
in the receiving port's unique address are insignifi-
cant. The remaining bit(s) in the remaining bit
positions of the port's unique address are signifi-
cant. The detection of "don't care" bits effectively
defines a generic subset address. The effective
generic subset address is compared to the unique
address of each port having an associated receiving
station to determine if the associated transmitted
data message is intended for the port's associated
station as a member of the subset.

In the present example, the transmitted address is
a 0 in the B1 position and a 1 in the B2 position and
the mask applied is a 1 in the B1 position and a 0 in
the B2 position. See FIG. 5, lines 501 and 502 of the
translation table for port 105. The port address
port 105 is 01 where 0 is in the B1 position and 1 is
the B2 position.

As previously described, the port's address
stored in port address 204 of FIG. 2 and comparator
203 receives the transmitted destination address
over transmitted address path 216, and the port
address over path 214. Assume that the paths 216
and 214 comprise several paths where each path
carries a specified one, that is B1 and B2 of the
transmitted destination address, the mask and the
port address.

The following circuit logic operations are concur-
rently executed. However, for ease of discussion,
each bit on each lead and each gate function will be
viewed separately. The B1 on of the port address,
0, is applied to exclusive NOR gate 300 over the
address B1 path and the B1 bit of the transmitted
address, a 0, is applied to exclusive NOR gate
over transmitted address B1 path. The combination
of a 0 on port address B1 path and a 0 on transmit
address B1 path provides an output of 1 on path
The 1 on path 305 is applied to OR gate
Concurrently, the B1 on of the mask, a 1, is ap-
plied to OR gate 301 over mask B1 path. The combina-
tion of a 1 on path 305 and a 1 on mask B1 path to
gate 301 provides a 1 on path 306.

Concurrently, the B2 bit of the port address, 1,
applied to exclusive NOR gate 302 over port ad-
B2 path and the B2 bit of the transmitted address,
1, is applied to exclusive NOR gate 302
transmitted address B2 path. The combination

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on the port address B2 path and a 1 on the transmitted address B2 path provides an output of 1 on path 307. The 1 on path 307 is applied to OR gate 303. Concurrently, the B2 bit of the mask, a 0, is applied to OR gate 303 over mask B2 path. The combination of the 1 on path 307 and a 0 on the mask B2 path to OR gate 303 provides an output of 1 on path 308. AND gate 304 concurrently receives an input of a 1 on path 308 and a 1 on path 308. The combination of the 1 on path 308 and a 1 on path 308 provides a 1 output on path 213 from AND gate 304. This 1 indicates that the masked address is effectively generic to the port's unique address such that the associated station of the port is a member of the subset. Comparator 203 generates a match signal to FIFO control 205 over path 213, and FIFO 205 enables FIFO 206 over path 216 so as to allow associated station. 101, to receive the data message in the manner previously described.

The above-described circuit logic imputed the "don't care" status to the first bit, B1, of the port's unique address such that only the B2 bit was significant in determining whether the transmitted data message was intended for the associated station.

Now, assume that the comparator illustrated in FIG. 3 is included in the REC side of port 107 having associated station 103 which is another member of the designated subset of receivers. The address of port 107 is 11 and, as previously described, the mask applied to the transmitted destination address, 01, is a 10. The "don't care" bit is in the B1 position. Exclusive NOR gate 300 receives a 1 over port address B1 path and a 0 over transmitted address B1 path. This combination provides a 0 output on path 305. The combination of a 0 on path 305 and a 1 on mask B1 path to OR gate 301 provides a 1 output on path 305. Concurrently, exclusive NOR gate 302 receives a 1 over port address B2 path and a 1 over transmitted address B2 path. This combination of a 1 and a 1 to exclusive NOR gate 302 provides a 1 output on path 307. The combination of a 1 on path 307 and a 0 on mask B2 path to OR gate 303 provides a 1 output on path 308. The combination of a 1 on path 308 and a 1 on path 308 provides a 1 output from AND gate 304 over path 213. This 1 indicates that the masked address is effectively generic to the port's unique address such that the associated station of the port is a member of the subset. Associated station 103 will receive the data message in the manner previously described.

The above-described circuit logic imputed the "don't care" status to the first bit, B1, of the port's unique address such that only the B2 bit was significant in determining whether the transmitted data message was intended for the associated station.

Now, assume that the comparator illustrated in FIG. 3 is included in the REC side of port 106 having associated station 102 which is not a member of the designated subset of receivers. The address of port 106 is 10 and, as previously described, the mask applied to the transmitted address, 01, is a 10. The "don't care" bit is in the B1 position. Exclusive NOR gate 300 receives a 1 over port address B1 path and

a 0 over transmitted address B1 path. This combination provides a 0 output on path 305. The combination of a 0 on path 305 and a 1 on mask B1, path to OR gate 301 provides a 1 output on path 306. Concurrently, exclusive NOR gate 302 receives a 0 over port address B2 path and a 1 over transmitted address B2 path. This combination provides a 0 output on path 307. The combination of a 0 on path 307 and a 0 on mask B2 path to OR gate 303 provides a 0 output on path 308. The combination of a 0 on path 308 and a 1 on path 308 provides a 0 output from AND gate 304 over path 213. This 0 indicates that associated station 102 of port 106 is not a member of the subset and therefore, the data message will not be received by it. The masked address is not effectively generic to the port's unique address. The data portion of the packet is not applied to station 102 in the manner previously described.

The above description discloses the application of a two bit mask to a two bit address to reach a number of different subsets. To reach every possible combination of ports having associated stations which comprise subsets, the mask for a two bit address requires expansion by additional bits which define mask configurations which allow a transmitting station to reach any combination of receivers it specifies. Additionally, a larger address than two bits may be masked in order to achieve selective broadcasting to a plurality of ports having associated stations. However, for ease of description only a two bit address and mask were described. Further, the comparator circuitry requires more complex logic to provide the appropriate decoding function for a larger mask and/or address. However, only a few gate logic functions were disclosed to simplify the explanation of the mask decoding process.

In the above-described manner, selective broadcasting is achieved from a transmitting one of the stations to two or more stations. A single address is manipulated with a mask as derived from a matrix translation table to effectively form a generic subset address. The mask is included in the address portion of a data packet. The transmitted data packet is received by a port. The port comprises circuit logic to determine the significant bits in the transmitted address and compares the corresponding significant bit(s) of the port's unique address to the effective generic subset address. If a match occurs, the associated station of the port is a member of the subset and it will receive the transmitted data message. If no match occurs, the associated station of the port is not a member of the subset and it will not receive the transmitted data. In the above-described manner, selective broadcasting is achieved in a multi-user environment.

While a specific embodiment of the invention has been disclosed, variations in structural detail, within the scope of the appended claims, are possible and are contemplated. There is no intention of limitation to what is contained in the abstract or the exact disclosure as herein presented. The above-described arrangements are only illustrative of the application of the principles of the invention. Normally, other arrangements may be devised by those

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aidied in the art without departing from the spirit and
the scope of the invention.

Claims

1. In a Local Area Network (LAN) having a
selective broadcasting arrangement for trans-
mitting messages to a subset of a plurality of
stations (100-103) of said LAN wherein each of
said stations (100-103) has a unique address,
said arrangement comprising:
means (108, 224) responsive to a transmitting
one (103) of said stations requesting a selective
broadcast for generating a mask with a unique
address to form an effective address generic to
each member of said subset of stations;
means (220-223) for transmitting said effec-
tive generic address together with an associ-
ated date message from said transmitting
station (103) to said plurality of stations
(100-103); and
means (202-204) at each of said plurality of
stations (100-103) for translating said effective
generic address to determine if said associated
data message is intended for said station as a
member of said subset.

2. The arrangement of claim 1 wherein said
arrangement further comprises:
means (224) for generating said unique
address associated with a single member of
said subset;
means (102) for specifying each unique
address for each member of said subset;
means (108) for selecting said mask based
on each said specified unique address and said
generated unique address; and
means (109) for identifying a portion of said
generated unique address which corresponds
to a like portion of each specified unique
address for each member of said subset to
form said effective generic address.

3. The arrangement of claim 1 wherein said
arrangement further comprises:
means (200) for receiving said effective
generic address at said plurality of stations;
means (204) for concurrently providing an
associated unique address at each one of said
plurality of stations; and
means (202) for comparing said effective
generic address with said provided associated
unique address of each one of said plurality of
stations to determine an occurrence of a match.

4. The arrangement of claim 1 wherein said
arrangement further comprises:
means (206) for enabling a transmission of
said associated data message to each of said
stations as members of said subset when said
effective generic address matches said like
portion of said provided associated unique
address following said comparison.

5. In a Local Area Network (LAN), a method
for disseminating data messages to a subset
(100-101) of a plurality of receiving stations

(100-103) wherein each station (100-103) has a
unique address, said method comprises the
steps of:
providing in a transmitting one (103) of said
stations a mask together with a unique address
to form an effective address generic to each
member of said subset (100-101) of stations;
transmitting said effective generic address
together with an associated data message from
said transmitting station (103) to said plurality of
stations (100-103); and
translating said effective generic address to
determine if said associated data message is
intended for each station (100-103) as a
member of said subset (100-101).

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said method
further comprises the steps of:
providing said unique address associated
with a prescribed member (100) of said subset;
specifying each unique address for each
member of said subset (100-101);
selecting said mask based on each said
specified address for each member of said
subset (100-101) and said provided unique
address; and
identifying a portion of said provided unique
address which corresponds to a like portion of
each specified unique address for each mem-
ber of said subset (100-101) to form said
effective generic address.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein said method
further comprises the steps of:
receiving said effective generic address at
said plurality of stations (100-103);
concurrently providing an assigned address
of each one of said plurality of stations
(100-103); and
comparing said effective generic address
with said provided assigned unique address of
each one of said plurality of stations (100-103)
to determine an occurrence of a match.

8. The method of claim 5 wherein said method
further comprises the steps of:
enabling a transmission of said associated
data message to each of said stations (100-103)
as members of said subset (100-101) when said
effective generic address matches said like
portion of each provided assigned unique
address of one of said plurality of stations
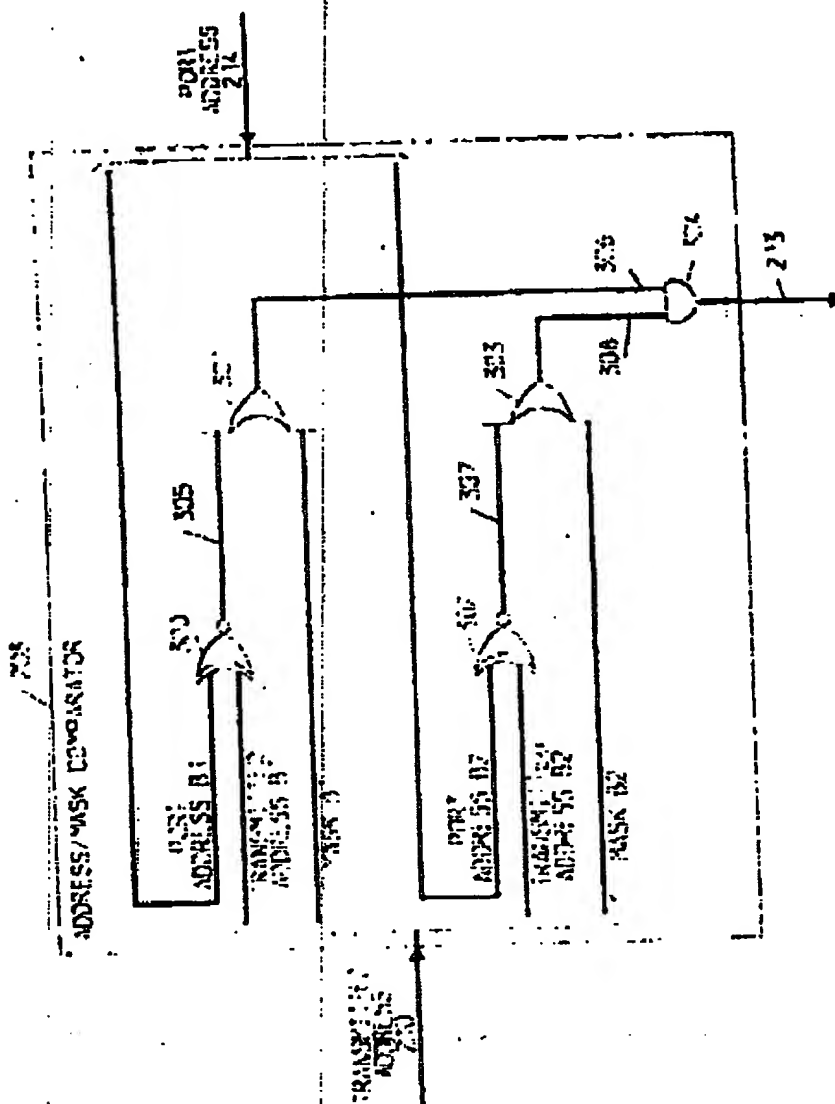(100-103) following said comparison.

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FIG. 1

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FIG. 2

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FIG. 3

ADDRESS/MASK COMPARATOR
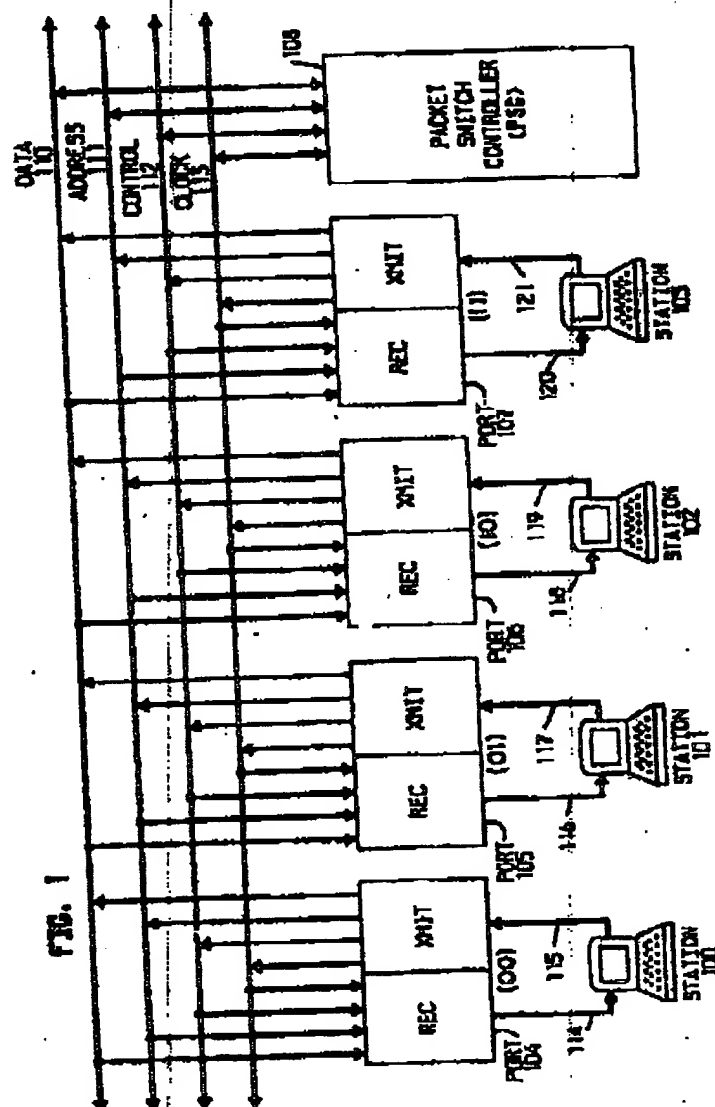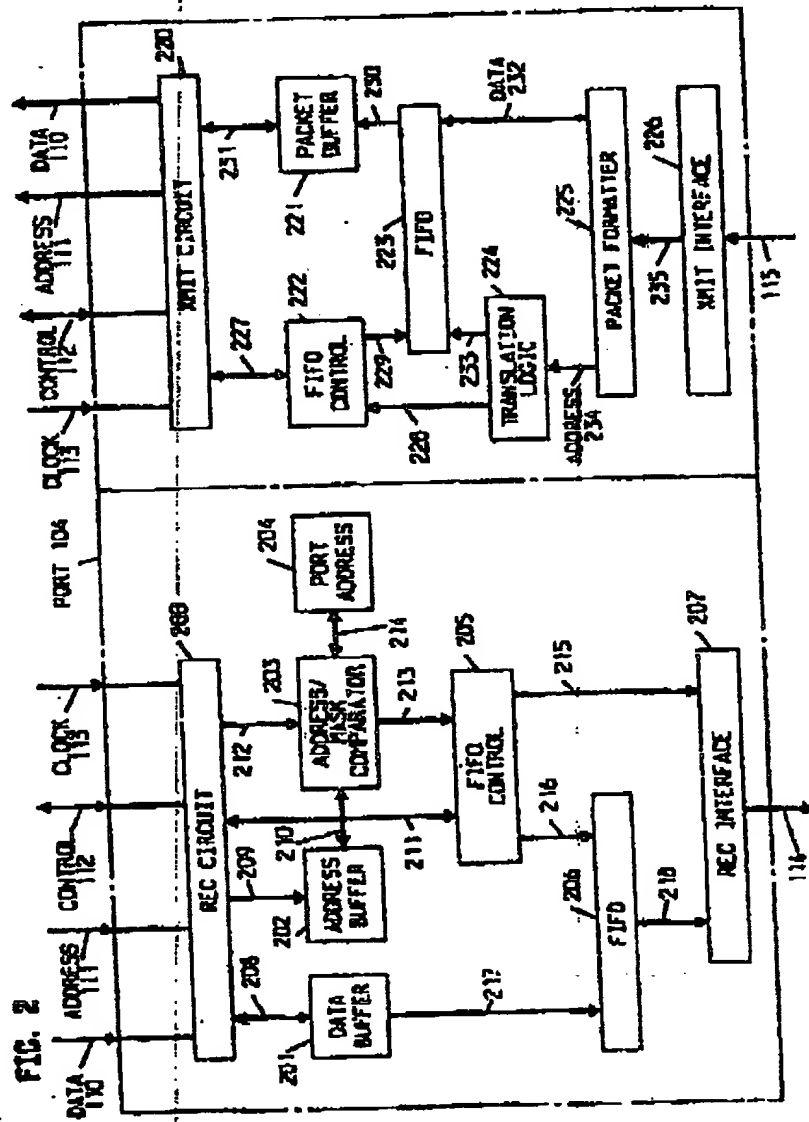
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FIG. 4

| DATA	MASK	DESTINATION ADDRESS
DATA MESSAGE		DESTINATION HEADER

FIG. 5

TRANSLATION TABLE: PORT 104

TRANSMITTING STATION IDENTITY	DESTINATION STATION IDENTITY	TRANSMITTED DESTINATION ADDRESS		SUBSET DESTINATION ADDRESSES	TRANSMITTED DESTINATION MASK		EFFECTIVE MASKED ADDRESS	
		B1	B2		B1	B2	B1	B2
100	101,103	0	1	01,11	1	0	X	1
100	100,101,102,103	0	1	00,01,10,11	1	1	X	X

(501, 502, 503)

TRANSLATION TABLE: PORT 105

TRANSMITTING STATION IDENTITY	DESTINATION STATION IDENTITY	TRANSMITTED DESTINATION ADDRESS		SUBSET DESTINATION ADDRESSES	TRANSMITTED DESTINATION MASK		EFFECTIVE MASKED ADDRESS	
		B1	B2		B1	B2	B1	B2
101	102,103	1	0	10,11	0	1	1	X
101	100,102	0	0	00,10	1	0	X	0

(504, 505, 506)

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FIG. 6

ADDRESS TRANSMITTED BY TRANSMITTING STATION	MASK TRANSMITTED 00	MASK TRANSMITTED 01	MASK TRANSMITTED 10	MASK TRANSMITTED 11
STATION 100 DESTINATION ADDRESS 00	RECEIVING STATION 100	RECEIVING STATION 100, 101	RECEIVING STATION 100, 102	RECEIVING STATION 100, 101, 102, 103
STATION 101 DESTINATION ADDRESS 01	RECEIVING STATION 101	RECEIVING STATION 100, 101	RECEIVING STATION 101, 103	RECEIVING STATION 100, 101, 102, 102
STATION 102 DESTINATION ADDRESS 10	RECEIVING STATION 102	RECEIVING STATION 102, 103	RECEIVING STATION 100, 102	RECEIVING STATION 100, 101, 102, 103
STATION 103 DESTINATION ADDRESS 11	RECEIVING STATION 103	RECEIVING STATION 102, 103	RECEIVING STATION 101, 103	RECEIVING STATION 100, 101, 102, 103

Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets
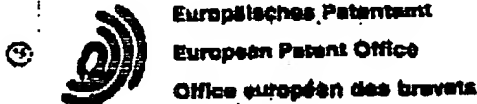
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(71) Applicant: AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND
TELEGRAPH COMPANY
550 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022(US)

(72) Inventor: Braun, Arthur Rechtman
7 Penrhyn Road
Woodridge Connecticut 06525(US)
Inventor: Franklin, Andrew DeJongh
3460 16th Street
Boulder Colorado 80300(US)
Inventor: Popenella, Gerard Joseph
4405 East 122nd Avenue
Thronton Colorado 80241(US)

(74) Representative: Buckley, Christopher Simon
Thirsk et al
Western Electric Company Limited 5
Mornington Road
Woodford Green Essex IG8 OTU(GB)

(54) Selective broadcasting arrangement for local area networks.

(57) In a Local Area Network (LAN) comprising a plurality of stations having associated ports where each port has a unique address, an arrangement for providing selective broadcasting to a subset of the plurality of stations is disclosed. A transmitting one of the stations designates the subset by specifying two or more receiving stations. Thereafter, the transmitting station generates a single data message having a single specified address of only one member of the subset. A packet switch controller defines a mask that identifies which stations are included in the subset. The packet switch controller provides the appropriate mask to the transmitting station which then transmits a data packet comprising a data message, the specified address and the appropriate mask to the LAN. Each port decodes the transmitted specified address and the mask to determine if the transmitted message is intended for its associated station as a member of the subset.

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FIG. 1
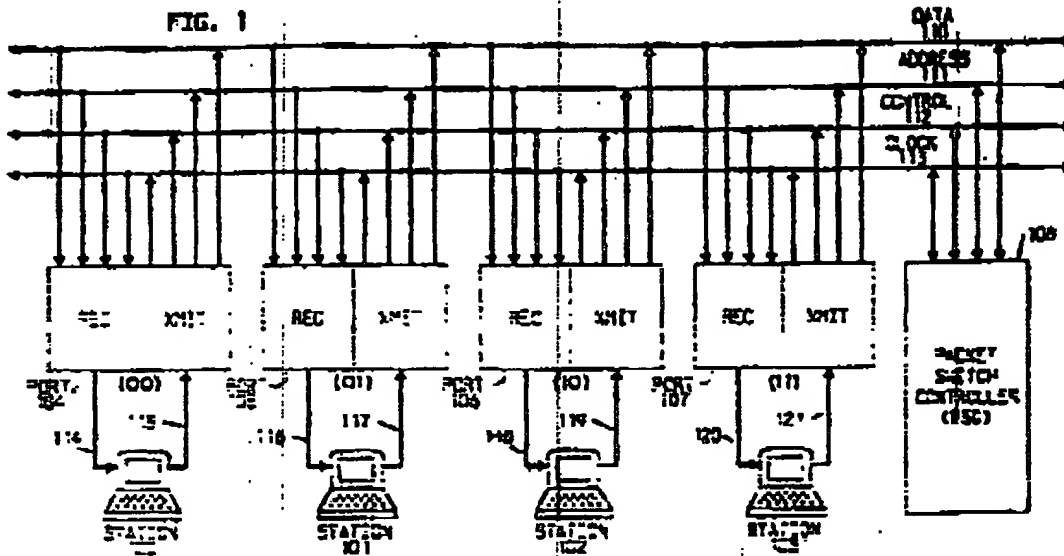
European Patent Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 87 30 6486

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.4)
X	FR-A-2 541 052 (ELECTRICITE DE FRANCE) * Abstract; page 2, lines 9-27; page 7, line 29 - page 9, line 13; figures 3,4 *	1-8	H 04 L 11/18 H 04 L 11/16 H 04 L 11/20
X,P	EP-A-0 200 447 (EMI) * Abstract; page 2, line 27 - page 4, line 25; page 6, line 1 - page 7, line 14; figure 1 *	1-8	
A	US-A-4 131 881 (ROBINSON) * Abstract; column 2, line 23 - column 3, line 6; figures 1,2 *	1-8	
A	IBM TECHNICAL DISCLOSURE BULLETIN, vol. 20, no. 9, February 1978, page 3689, New York, US; D.J. ZIMMERMAN: "Address comparison for control unit with variable device range" * Whole article *	1	
A	PROCEEDINGS OF THE 9TH DATA COMMUNICATIONS SYMPOSIUM, Whistler Mountain, B.C., 10th - 13th September 1985, pages 172-179, ACM; D.R. CHERITON et al.: "Host groups; A multicast extension for datagram internetworks" * Abstract; page 172, left-hand column, lines 13-18 *	1-8	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4) H 04 L G 06 F

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE	19-12-1989	O'REILLY D.J.K.

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date
D : document cited in the application
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